

## Differences Between



## Primary Elections - General Elections

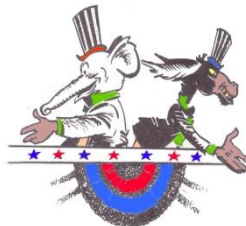
First time voters and voters new to our state are often confused by what is expected of them at a Primary Election and what is expected of them at a General Election.

A **Primary Election** is a nominating election. Winning the party's nomination is the first step in the election process. It narrows the field in a political party to one individual for a specific office.

A **General Election** is the election in which all voters make the **final choice** from among the party nominees and the independent candidates for a specific office.

***\*\*Not all elected offices are nominated by party\*\****

Tennessee has two recognized parties under current state law: the Republican Party and the Democratic Party.



When a candidate is successful in a **Primary Election** they advance to the **General Election** for their particular office. For example: in a Primary Election for the Office of Governor, the Republicans run against Republicans and the Democrats run against Democrats. The successful Republican nominee and the successful Democratic nominee for Governor would advance to the **General Election** to face each other and any independent candidates.

Individuals who are the top vote getter in any **General Election** are elected with the powers and responsibilities granted to their office by law.



## **VOTING AT A PRIMARY ELECTION**

**In Tennessee, citizens register to vote.** No declaration of party affiliation is required at the time of registration. Tennessee does not register by party.

All legally registered voters in Tennessee are issued a “Voter Registration Card” by their county election office. No party affiliation appears on the voter’s card.



When a voter appears to vote during any **Primary Election** they must declare if they wish to vote in the Republican Primary or the Democratic Primary.

**Voters with questions regarding elections may email;**  
[vote.questions@nashville.gov](mailto:vote.questions@nashville.gov)

The voter's declaration is recorded on a signed *Application for Ballot*. The ballot issued to the voter for the Primary Election will have only the names of candidates in the party that the voter is affiliating with on that Election Day.

When two Primary Elections are being conducted on the same date (Presidential Preference and County Primary), the voter is prohibited from voting in different primary elections on the same day (one political party locally and the other political party nationally). Their ballot will be a Republican Ballot all the way up and down the ballot or it will be a Democratic Ballot all the way up and down the ballot.



## Offices with a Mandatory Primary Election

President, Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, State Senate and State Representative

## What about County Offices & Primaries?

Each of your county's two Political Parties has the right to call a County Primary Election for **any or all** of the County Offices elected in 2010. Local County Election Offices have no authority or right to call a county primary election for either party (nor do local county commissions).

School Board and City Offices are not elected by political party affiliation in the State of Tennessee (unless a city charter expressly permits a primary for a city office).

## ***2010 County Primary Election Cycle***

Counties can have a County Primary on May 4, 2010 Election (Tuesday). The individuals that obtain the most votes during the County Primary Election will advance to the County General Election to run against the other party's nominee and any independents that qualified for that office. Not every county will have a primary election - that is a county decision.

The **2010 County General Election** will be held on Thursday, August 5. For a county office, party nominees and independent candidates all qualify at the same time.

## **2010 State Primary Election Cycle**

The State Primary for the Office of Governor, U.S. Congress, State Senate, & State Representative will be held on August 5, 2010 (Thursday).

## **2010 November General Election**

Tuesday, November 2, 2010 is the State General Election Date for the offices on the August 5<sup>th</sup> State Primary Ballot.

## **Office Seekers**

Candidates for Federal, State, County or Municipal Office should contact their local County Election Office to inquire about nominating procedures, qualifications and qualifying deadlines for various elected offices.



**DAVIDSON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION**  
**800 2<sup>ND</sup> Avenue South**  
**Nashville, TN 37202**  
**615-862-8800**  
<http://www.nashville.gov/vote/>